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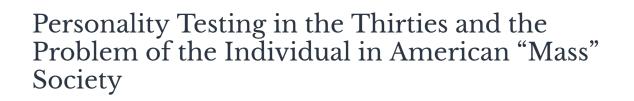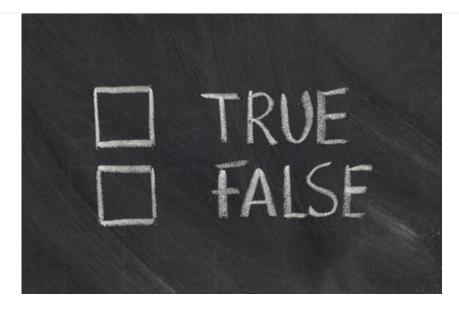
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Personality Testing in the Thirties and the Problem of the Individual in American "Mass" Society

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In the early 1930s, personality psychologist Henry Murray asked subjects to tell a story including both a hero and a universal human dilemma. The stories had to be based on a series of illustrations, however, such as one where "a woman has her hands squeezed around the throat of another woman whom she appears to be pushing backwards across the banister of a stairway."[1] Around the same time, another psychologist named Starke Hathaway asked subjects to reply "True," "False," or "Cannot Say" to a collection of 550 items, including "If the money were right, I would like to work for a circus or carnival."[2] Within the answers to such questions, both men saw the key to understanding the human personality. Murray's personality test was a "projective" one premised on human irrationality and complexity, whereas Hathaway's was rigidly empirical, premised on human rationality and transparency. Despite the dubious nature of these tests and their strikingly different aims and assumptions about human nature and how to measure it, both soon achieved a wild popularity among personality psychologists across the globe. But what was the historical context in which such questionable and disparate tests emerged? What specific historical factors in the 1930s gave rise to the implementation and popularity of personality testing?

This article analyzes personality testing in modern American culture by situating it partly in the political and social context of the 1930s, and partly within the broader, more nebulous cultural context of modernity. Most significant here is the dual context of an emerging "culture of personality" and the contradictory anxieties regarding the fate of the individual in "mass" society: anxiety over the loss of individual uniqueness amid a "mass" society on the one hand and, on the other, fear of failing to conform to society's standards and thus being considered "abnormal." [3] Murray's and Hathaway's personality tests reveal how these competing impulses shaped personality psychology. Rather than agreeing on basic premises of how to map the self, they diverged sharply even as they occupied the same historical moment of uncertainty over the individual in a mass society. This essay follows Ian A.M. Nicholson in suggesting that "personality" as a new valuation and research category for the self in modern America was successful precisely because of its ability to house such contradictory conceptions as espoused by Murray and Hathaway.[4] The self could be simultaneously unique and average, distinctive and normal. This dialectic of the self-resolved Americans' simultaneous fears over the loss of individuality in a mass culture, and

over being different or abnormal in an increasingly introspective culture obsessed with the average. Personality psychology was significant in its reflection and reinforcement of this "culture of personality."

The Cultural Origins of Personality

The word "personality" in the English language goes back to at least the thirteenth century, but its meaning has evolved over time. Originally used to describe the quality of being "a person and not a thing," by the eighteenth century the word denoted one's individuality—his or her personal identity.[5] By the twentieth century, Andrew Heinze argues that "a new language and valuation of 'personality' emerged," and the concept came to be the principal one used to describe the self in the modern world.[6] Cultural historians identify a related term, "character," as the keyword in nineteenth-century Victorian America, representing the dominant middle-class values of the time: morality, purity, and duty. Warren Susman was the first to argue that a "culture of personality" replaced this "culture of character" in the early twentieth century. Stemming from the exigencies of modern, urban, industrial life, Susman argued, one's "personality" became tied to one's ability to stand out and be "magnetic," "attractive," and "masterful."[7] Later historians have complicated the decisiveness and immediacy of this shift, while others have questioned the impetus for the transition, but all agree that "personality" emerged as the crucial conception for understanding the self in the modern world.[8]

This essay contributes to this amorphous cultural debate by examining personality psychologists and the specific tests they devised to map the self. Modern personality testing emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century and personality psychology developed into its own sub-discipline in the 1920s and 1930s. Personality psychology, then, was a product of the new "culture of personality," and its research methodology should be considered in this cultural context. Drawing on the approach adopted by several cultural historians, this essay examines psychology and personality not to extract "insights into timeless human nature," but rather "to better understand the reasons why psychological definitions ... and psychological concepts ... gain cultural authority and lose explanatory power at particular historical moments."[9] At the same time that personality psychology was a reflection of larger cultural processes, however, it was also an important agent in determining how

ordinary people understood the self. As a scientific discipline in an increasingly technocratic and professional society, personality psychology enjoyed prestige. Its findings, therefore, had particular importance in shaping Americans' conceptions of the self, even though people did not accept them passively and uncritically.

In many ways, this is a transnational story. Psychology as a discipline was by nature transnational, holding no respect for national boundaries and traveling freely between the United States and Western Europe.[10] Psychology, too, professionalized during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries in the transnational cultural context of "modernity." If "modernization" concerns the rapid technological and institutional changes stemming from industrial society, "modernity" refers to "the individual experiences of the transformation from an agrarian into an urban, mass society."[11] Joel Dinerstein captures succinctly the key changes in terms of this transition:

The shift entailed a gradual loss of secure identities previously embedded in local social institutions: church and religion, family and community, class and geography. Individuals became just another element in the flow of industrial society, as much as capital, raw materials, or mass-produced goods. The grounds for identity shifted to new forms of popular culture, such as dime novels, radio dramas, films, mass consumption, and the urban, industrial landscape.

Modernity further signifies the sensory (and cognitive) adjustment to new experiences of space and time, speed and movement, self and other. Bodies adjusted to fast, impersonal transportation networks (rail, auto, air), to communication networks that separated the message from the sender (telegraph, telephone), and to new visual regimes rendered through film, aerial perspectives, or abstract art. The so-called "speed-up" of modern life produced apocalyptic fears of sensory overload, and the "shocks" of these new experiences were theorized by sociologists such as Karl Marx, Georg Simmel, Thorstein Veblen, and Walter Benjamin. With such radical shifts in sensoryscapes, work, leisure, personal contact, and the rate of change, the individual consciousness could hardly remain in nineteenth-century ways of seeing.[12]

These far-reaching processes shaped Western Europe and the United States around the same time and with incredible vigor. To be sure,

modernity was not a unilinear, monolithic process experienced by all Americans and Europeans equally. Modernity, rather, was characterized by diversity of viewpoints and experiences. Still, the resulting changes affected life to one degree or another, from the village to the metropolis.

Although Western Europeans and Americans shared the language, methodology, and wider cultural context of modernity, the sub-discipline of personality psychology remained dominated by Americans. Psychologists such as Robert Woodworth, Gordon Allport, Henry Murray, and Starke Hathaway led the field.[13] Although some Europeans developed important personality tests, such as Hermann Rorschach's Inkblot Test, often these were poorly received throughout continental Europe, while they found a receptive audience in the U.S. [14] Although American psychologists borrowed heavily from Europe in theory and practice, it seemed that the obsession with personality remained a distinctively, though not singularly, American phenomenon.

The reasons for this obsession with personality in the U.S. can be explained by the more specific cultural context in America in the first half of the twentieth century, and specifically anxiety over the fate of the individual in modern America. Conditioned by the deep strains of individualism rooted in the nation's frontier mythology, many observers at the turn of the century perceived with alarm the increasingly diverse, industrialized, and urbanized nation. Many saw the cities as filled with unruly "mobs" and "crowds" that threatened social stability.[15] By the 1920s, these fears accelerated as anxiety over crowds morphed into a fear of the "masses," which portended the loss of individual significance in an anonymous urban society permeated by a homogenizing mass culture. World War I was a crucial turning point, as "authoritarian regimes abroad, America's own wartime hysteria (fueled by new communications technologies), the insistent urban context, and a consumer-based economy" made discussions of the masses and mass persuasion particularly pressing.[16] A host of intellectuals and social theorists, including Walter Lippman and H. L. Mencken, emerged decrying the prospect of democracy amid such a manipulative and "passive body of uprooted individuals."[17] At the heart of these issues was the fate of the individual in a mass society. Who was the modern person, now that he or she was unmoored from the village, faced with scientific skepticism,

forced into an alienating work environment, and lost amid a homogenizing culture?[18]

If one element of this fear of the "masses" involved securing one's unique personal identity amid homogenizing forces, another element related to deciphering the character of national identity. In the context of rapid immigration, urbanization, and industrialization, who was the average *American*? As Sarah Igo describes, Americans looked to secure their national identity by comparing themselves to others, to the "average," the "normal." This phenomenon was a product of scientific, commercial, institutional, and cultural changes that made it both possible and appealing to compare oneself to a national average, as dubious as that concept remained. She tracks this new obsession with the average through national surveys and opinions polls, arguing that Americans looked to secure a sense of personal and national identity by comparing themselves to social scientific averages.[19]

In these ways, Americans exhibited the paradoxical impulse to be simultaneously unique and "average" in modern society. The prominence of personality psychology in the United States, then, reflects this larger cultural concern with the fate of the individual in America, and the diversity of approaches within the sub-discipline reflects the dual anxieties over conformity and individuality. More than ever, Americans in the modern world needed a conception of the self that could resolve these contradictory anxieties. The way in which "personality" became this modern conception is the central problem explored in this essay.

Henry Murray, the Thematic Apperception Test, and the Humanistic Response to Modernity

When asked about the reasons for his shift from physiology to psychology in the 1920s, Henry Murray explained, "human personality, because of its present sorry state, had become *the* problem of our time— a hive of conflicts, lonely, half-hollow, half-faithless, half-lost, half-neurotic, half-delinquent, not equal to the problems that confronted it, not very far from proving itself an evolutionary failure."[20] This comment reveals Murray's concern for the fate of the individual in modern society at the same time that it suggests an activist element inspiring his work in the field. Yet too often scholarship on Murray has overlooked the social and cultural context in which he self-consciously

functioned, instead highlighting his place in the disciplinary dialogue of psychology and the interpersonal relationships that informed his life. [21] This "internalist" scholarship slights Murray's relationship with his surrounding environment.[22] Though we now understand the psychological and professional context in which Murray operated, his relationship to the wider culture remains unclear. This section argues that Murray's life, work, and significance can only be appreciated fully by placing his personal and professional life in a broader cultural context. It also shows how Murray, in addition to reflecting the emergent culture of personality and fear of the "masses," imbued the concept of personality with mystery, complexity, and uniqueness.

Despite his important later accomplishments in the discipline, there was nothing inevitable about Murray's turn to psychology, and, in fact, it appeared highly unlikely at first. Born in 1893 into a conservative, moderately wealthy family in New York City, Murray remained an indifferent student through grade school and college at Harvard, where he mused that his "two fields of concentration had been rowing and romance."[23] Despite a troubled relationship with his mother, eye problems, and stuttering issues, Murray's childhood was that of "an average, privileged American boy."[24] Murray became a more serious student after marrying the wealthy Josephine Lee Rantoul in 1916 and entering medical school at Columbia. He earned an M.D. from Columbia in 1919 and a Ph.D. in biochemistry from Cambridge in 1927, where he conducted extensive research on chicken embryos. At this point, the evolution of his professional career revealed few signs that he would enter the field of psychology, much less revolutionize it.

Beneath the impressive veneer of this professional career was a much less stable and complacent personal life. Murray described the 1920s as a period of "profound affectional upheaval" for him. He began cultivating his emotional potential, which he felt had been denied by exacting biochemical work in the laboratory, by engrossing himself in humanistic literature by Melville and Proust, in music by Beethoven and Wagner, in poetry by E.A. Robinson, and in plays by Eugene O'Neill.[25] He clearly was searching for deeper meaning and a better understanding of the human experience, and in 1923 two experiences changed his life. The first was his reading of Carl Jung's *Psychological Types* and the subsequent personal relationship he established with the famous Swiss

psychiatrist. The second was his encounter with a young woman named Christiana Morgan, whose beauty, intelligence, and fascination with psychology excited in Murray feelings previously unknown to him.[26] These two relationships—one unlocking profound insight into humanity through the unconscious, the other unleashing intense sexual and emotional desires—pushed Murray away from biochemistry and into psychology. In 1926, while still completing his Ph.D., Murray took an assistantship position under Morton Prince of Harvard, who had just founded the Harvard Psychological Clinic to study hypnosis and abnormal psychology. Soon after, Harvard appointed Murray as an assistant faculty member of the psychology department, though he had never received any formal training in the discipline (unbeknownst to most of the faculty).[27]

Culture conditioned Murray's personal experiences and his path towards psychology. For example, Murray's feelings of superficiality and his longing for deep experience and fulfillment were common among Americans at the turn of the twentieth century. T.J. Jackson Lears has written about this extensively, contending that Americans began to feel that their "sense of selfhood had become fragmented, diffuse, and somehow 'weightless' or 'unreal'" as a result of "the corrosive impact of the market on familiar values, the dislocating impact of technological advance on everyday experience—and above all in the secularization of Protestantism."[28] Lears traces how consumption and the "therapeutic ethos" associated with it became the major way Americans attempted to secure their identity and attain personal fulfillment in the modern world. Along with consumption, Americans at the turn of the century sought fulfillment through bodily vigor and emotional intensity, evident in a range of popular activities from the Arts and Crafts movement to camping and competitive sports.[29] Murray's longing for deep experience and emotional intensity must be understood as part of this larger context. His immersion in literature and music as well as his prolonged extramarital affair with Christiana Morgan were not atypical ways in which Americans dealt with modern anxieties. His interest in psychology and selfhood, furthermore, was widespread. Murray's privileged life and education, however, positioned him to use the social sciences to explore his ideas and thus shape an academic discipline in ways unavailable to most.

While modern concerns conditioned his movement towards personality psychology as a career (and, indeed, the career itself was a distinctively modern one), it also informed his entire research agenda. As mentioned previously, Carl Jung had a decisive impact on Murray's early career, for in the unconscious Murray saw an avenue to exploring the complexity, nuance, and mystery of human beings. Murray came to Harvard intending to explore the unconscious through psychoanalysis and other techniques, only to discover that mainstream American psychology had very different interests. The discipline remained dominated by psychometrics and behaviorism. Indeed, according to Murray "almost everyone was nailed down to some piece of apparatus, measuring a small segment of the nervous system as if it were isolated from the entrails."[30] Murray, instead, longed to study people holistically and capture the complexity and mystery of each person, whereas most of academic psychology still concerned itself with outwardly measurable behaviors perceived as reactions to external stimuli. As we will see, these psychometricians also were responding to modern cultural concerns regarding the fate of the individual in society, but they chose other ways to address those concerns. Murray's uniqueness here can be explained partly by his training outside of formal American psychology. Regardless, Murray's frustration prompted him to unleash a virulent attack on the discipline in a published paper in 1935, where he complained that mainstream psychology "has contributed practically nothing to the knowledge of human nature … It has not only failed to bring light to the great, hauntingly recurrent problems, but it has no intention, one is shocked to realize, of attempting to investigate them."[31] Evident in these comments is Murray's interest in using psychology to further a humanistic goal. In a modern world of weightlessness, of fractured selfhood, of humans as cogs in the wheel of industry, Murray wanted to restore depth and mystery to individuals. The development of the field of personality psychology, especially by the 1930s, allowed him to use science to further these goals.

In direct opposition to most practitioners of the discipline in the United States, Murray set out to investigate the self in a holistic, comprehensive, often psychoanalytic way. Here he was indebted to Sigmund Freud, even as he insisted on revising his ideas. Freud most important contribution to psychoanalysis is founding the theory of mind in the late nineteenth century.[32] In his *Studies on Hysteria* (1895) and his *Interpretation of*

Dreams (1899), Freud explained the role of the unconscious in shaping human activity, of dreams in revealing the unconscious, and of psychoanalysis as a way of treating pathology. Later, in 1923, Freud's *The Ego and the Id* proposed his formative structural theory of the mind that divided the mind into three distinct, interacting parts: the id (consisting of wholly unconscious drives), the ego (consisting of the partly conscious mechanisms to plan, calculate, and reason), and the superego (consisting of the partly conscious realm that harbors the conscience).[33]

Around the same time, Carl Jung reached similar conclusions about the unconscious by elaborating on Francis Galton's and Wilhelm Wundt's word-association experiments.[34] Freud and Jung soon forged a productive professional and personal relationship, aided by their agreement on methodology in assessing the human mind, which centered on exploring the unconscious and repression through dreams and projections. The two eventually had a falling out, however, as Jung came to reject Freud's strict empiricism, leading Freud to prefer an "exclusively causal and reductive account of the psyche."[35] Because of his basis in the clinical setting, Freud sought merely to explain the individual psyche, and he did so only through his or her individual experiences. Jung, on the other hand, saw humans as more than just "variously disordered object[s];" they were also "self-creating subject[s]."[36] Indeed, for Jung, a collective unconscious that transcended the individual was also central to understanding human personality.

Murray drew ideas and methods from these intellectual giants—siding much more clearly with Jung—but he refused to adhere narrowly to any particular school of thought. "I have never called myself a Freudian, a Jungian, or any other –ian," he once declared.[37] And in terms of psychoanalysis, he accepted "a large part (more than half) of the psychoanalytic scheme," but he used it only to inform his research, not totally direct it.[38] His specific entrees into personality research reveal his eclecticism, as his magnum opus, *Explorations in Personality* (1938), drew from interviews, self-report questionnaires, and a whole host of projective tests. This eclecticism underscored Murray's wider goal of developing a comprehensive view of the human personality, using any and all tests that would further that goal.

A closer look at *Explorations* and at the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), which comprised but one small part of his broader project, reveals how Murray attempted to deal with the self in modern society. To begin, the project is based upon two premises: 1) personality *can* be measured comprehensively, and 2) personality *needs* to be measured. The first premise reveals Murray's faith in science to isolate and identify something as complex and amorphous as "personality." Despite his insistence on the complexity and mystery of human beings, he believed that science could provide a valuable, comprehensive framework for evaluating the self. The second premise reveals Murray's disquiet with the place of the individual in modern society—his insistence that "human personality … had become *the* problem of our time."[39] He believed that a more complete portrait of human beings was needed because, like the modernists, he saw the modern self as fractured, shallow, and weightless due to the dislocations of urban, industrial society. In a footnote in *Explorations*, he comments directly on this superficiality, saying there is:

A general disposition which is widespread in America, namely, to regard the peripheral personality—conduct rather than inner feeling and intention—as of prime importance. Thus, we have the fabrication of a 'pleasing personality,' mail courses in comportment, courtesy as good business, the best pressed clothes, the best barber shops, Listerine and deodorants, the contact man, friendliness without friendship, the prestige of movie stars and Big Business, quantity as an index of worth, a compulsion for fact-getting, the statistical analysis of everything, questionnaires and behaviorism.[40]

By mapping the self in a comprehensive way that accounted for the unconscious and the conscious, Murray hoped to add depth to the concept of personality. At the same time, he sought to revise Freudian interpretations of the self as overly neurotic and beset by irrationality and impulse, positing instead the centrality of rationality and self-actualization in the development of human personality.

From the very beginning, the massive project that would be published as *Explorations in Personality* aimed to grasp the depth of individual subjects. Rather than focusing on "the perceptive and cognitive functions of the human mind" or "the behaviour of animals" in laboratory settings, Murray analyzed "emotional and behavioural

reactions" to conditions that "resembled as nearly as possible those of everyday life."[41] The project examined 51 male subjects of college age, 39 of whom were Harvard students, and it divided them into four groups that researchers studied for two weeks, three weeks, two months, and six months, respectively (same tests, different intensities). Several researchers administered 29 procedures and tests to each subject. The research began with self-report questionnaires, free association exercises, and interviews to gain as much background information as possible, but then researchers gave a broad array of projective tests. A diverse staff of researchers "composed of poets, physicists, sociologists, anthropologists, criminologists, physicians; of democrats, fascists, communists, anarchists; of Jews, Protestants, Agnostics, Atheists; of pluralists, monists, solipsists; of behaviourists, configurationists, dynamicists, psycho-analysts; of Freudians, Jungians, Rankians, Adlerians, Lewinians, and Allportians" administered these tests and then collaborated together to determine the major aspects of each subject's personality.[42] This was a massive project that presumed the complexity of each subject; a complexity that could only be approached through thorough sustained and diverse testing of each candidate by a collection of variously-trained researchers.

Despite the diversity of approaches deployed by Murray, the most important tests were "projective" ones. Freud first developed the theory of projection in 1894, which held that people unconsciously cast outward onto other people or objects any unacceptable thoughts or feelings they have.[43] Various researchers drew from this theory to uncover unconscious forces guiding human behavior that were not accessible through introspection. The free association tests mentioned earlier operated on this premise, as they required subjects to respond immediately to various words. This immediate response "forces out words (as 'slips of the tongue') which under other circumstances would be inhibited. Thus speed may produce 'rifts' in the structure of thought."[44] Murray drew from a host of projective tests that aimed to penetrate the unconscious in a variety of creative ways. For example, Murray developed the "Music Reverie Test" in which a subject listens to a variety of classical compositions, and is instructed to let his/her mind drift and then "observe the images that come to mind and weave them into a plot or allegory as you proceed."[45] Another test is the "Odor Imagination Test" in which a subject is told to tell a story based upon a

particular smell—such as spearmint, benzoine, or carbon tetrachloride. [46] The utility of these tests in exposing unconscious elements of personality would soon become more appreciated in psychology, as evidenced, for instance, by the paper Lawrence Frank gave in 1939 encouraging the use of projective techniques in the discipline.[47]

By far the most important and enduring projective test was the Thematic Apperception Test—"Thematic" because "it elicited the animating themes of a person's life, 'Apperception' because it drew on the internal imaginative process."[48] The TAT presented subjects with a variety of provocative images that subjects then had to narrate into a story. The directions for this test were as follows:

This is a test of creative imagination. I am going to show you some pictures. Around each picture I want you to compose a story. Outline the incidents which have led up to the situation depicted in the picture, describe what is occurring at the moment—the feelings and thoughts of the characters—and tell what the outcome will be. Speak your thoughts aloud as they come to your mind. I want you to use your imagination to the limit.[49]

Psychologists examined the intersection of "needs" or "drives" of the patient with the social or inanimate forces of the image called "presses" to determine the "thema" or "dynamic skeleton, of the event."[50] Murray and other psychologists found the test so useful because they believed that patients reveal a great deal about their unconscious while narrating a story, but without realizing it because they are focused on a particular external image.

The TAT and its projective nature reflect Murray's wider humanistic ideals. For Murray, "in the human being imagination is more fundamental than perception."[51] Like his contemporary, Kurt Goldstein, and in a way anticipating Abraham Maslow, Murray saw humans as creative, self-actualizing beings, whose whole being is "as essential to an understanding of the parts as the parts are to an understanding of the whole."[52] In other words, individuals are "dynamic" and "goal-directed," not merely a collection of competing impulses reacting to external stimuli. He understood imagination and creativity as the most basic elements that defined humanity, seeing continuity among Native American art, the great literature of Melville,

and the stories formulated during sessions of the TAT. This was a direct repudiation of behaviorist scientists as well as cultural commentators who lambasted the irrational, lemming-like quality of individuals in crowds. These ideas also rebuffed Freudian conceptions of the unconscious. Murray, like other "neo-Freudians," saw Freudian psychoanalysis as excessively pessimistic and overly focused on neuroses. [53] The unconscious, for Murray, was more than merely a repository of repressed drives; it was also a bastion of creativity and human mystery. Moreover, as *Explorations* reveals, both human rationality and irrationality were central in coming to terms with the full human personality—hence the reliance of self-report techniques as well as projective ones.[54]

Though the wider cultural context of modernity helps explain the broader nature of these ideas, the political and social scientific context of the 1930s was central in solidifying them. The backdrop of fascism in Europe, and especially Hitler and Mussolini's stunning rise to power, as well as domestic variants of fascism, including eugenics, immigration restriction, segregation, and white supremacy, only underscored for Murray the necessity of empowering the individual against the excesses hyper-nationalism and intolerance. Furthermore, the rise of Communist Party USA signaled for many Americans a similar subversion of the individual to the collective. If the Scottsboro Boys case of 1931 pushed communism to national attention, the Popular Front of the mid-1930s represented the culmination of a radical movement that demanded structural changes to American society.[55] Though American communists such as Sidney Hook prioritized individuality even as they critiqued individualism, this distinction was lost on many Americans.

The climate of political upheaval during the 1930s also had practical effects within the social sciences. The persecution of European Jewry precipitated the migration of hundreds of European intellectuals to the United States, including many of the leading theorists in an emerging interdisciplinary field known as "culture-and-personality" (C&P).[56] C&P combined the insights of cultural anthropology, psychology, and psychoanalysis to investigate how the individual is fundamentally a social creature, but also how "society" is composed of differentiated individuals.

The intimate scientific collaboration resulting from forced European migration was central in instigating the C&P movement, but internalist trends within disciplines were also important. Although Boasian cultural anthropologists such as Ruth Benedict and Edward Sapir had traced holistic, integrated cultures, by the 1930s they sought to understand how those independent cultures transmitted their values to individuals. They thus began to study processes of socialization and enculturation, which in turn required an understanding of psychology. Psychologists and psychoanalysts, for their part, were shaped by trends within social science that upheld the centrality of culture and the embeddedness of each person within a social context. Karen Horney, Erich Fromm, Harry Stack Sullivan, Abram Kardiner, Ralph Linton, Cora DuBois, David Levy, Geoffrey Gorer, Ashley Montagu, and many others shared Murray's neo-Freudian views and comprised part of Murray's "community of discourse."[57] These figures clustered around institutions such as the New York Psychoanalytic Institute, the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute, and the American Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis, though they often rebelled against orthodox Freudian theory and criticized the conservatism of these institutions.[58] Murray, for example, railed against the orthodoxy of the Boston Psychoanalytic Society, while Karen Horney and four others were expelled from the New York Psychoanalytic Society in 1941 for their departure from orthodox Freudianism.[59] Murray and other personality psychologists such as Gordon Allport drew their ideas from this community of social scientists as they nurtured their own sub-discipline of personality psychology, which only became established within the field by the 1930s.

Out of this new institutional and intellectual context, Murray conducted and published research that reflected his humanism and concern for individuality. By developing tests that "discovered" the underlying mystery, complexity, and creativity of human beings, Murray helped imbue the concept of personality with these attributes. The richness of Murray's humanism would, however, dissipate among the commercial and clinical success of the TAT in the postwar era. Stemming from the practical needs of sorting out soldiers for wartime mobilization and matching workers to ever more complicated bureaucracies, military officials and corporate leaders solidified the TAT as "a reigning member of psychology's personality triumvirate."[60] The test would remain among the top ten most frequently used psychological tests, employed

on mental patients, job applicants, and juvenile delinquents, for instance, even as it lacked any standard of uniformity among most of its practitioners. More sinisterly for Murray, the test found a receptive audience in industry, especially in marketing and advertising. Corporations used the TAT to understand the unconscious forces shaping consumer habits, effectively re-purposing the test to reduce people's complexity into exploitable, actionable characteristics in order to maximize profits.[61]

On another level, however, Murray and his TAT would live on in personality psychology and in popular culture as symbol of the complexity and mystery of human beings. Indeed, his humanism would continue to inspire a strong cohort in the discipline throughout the rest of the century and into the next. Moreover, even as corporations attempted to exploit the test for commercial purposes, the idea of the "unconscious" in America, which was rehearsed in and popularized by the TAT, would remain a force for individuality and transcendence. Precisely because of its final immeasurability, the unconscious would remain a source of mystery and individuality that neither the impositions of mass society nor the incursions of scientific and technocratic rationality could extinguish.[62]

Starke Hathaway, the MMPI, and the Appeal of "Normality" in Modern America

In many ways, Starke Hathaway was the opposite of Murray. More of a pragmatist, Hathaway was drawn to the promises of the psychometric approach in mapping the self and dividing individuals into clear categories would be useful in a clinical setting. Averse to theory, he and his partner, the psychiatrist Charles J. McKinley, developed a radically empirical test that could "provide, in a single test, scores on all the more important phases of personality."[63] Though he never claimed that individuals were simple or easily quantified,[64] his test—the MMPI[65] —reveals Hathaway's basic behaviorist assumptions, which posited that a psychologist can derive a person's essential personality from observation and rational discourse. Whereas Murray sought to restore complexity and mystery to the self, Hathaway worked to quantify and categorize the individual. Their approaches differed as well. Murray's was qualitative and psychoanalytic, Hathaway's approach was quantitative and empiricist. But although these men demonstrate the diversity of aims

and approaches in personality psychology, this section argues that both psychologists and their tests are a product of the same modern context. To be sure, these men did not react simplistically to their larger environment. Rather, their contrasting personal and professional lives predisposed them to react in diverging ways to larger cultural anxieties over the fate of the individual in modern life. Indeed, their differing approaches highlight the competing tendencies in American culture generally—one towards upholding the individual as unique, the other towards placing the individual on a spectrum of "normality." Murray's and Hathaway's approaches reflect how these competing tendencies shaped personality psychology, and at the same time helped forge a modern conception of "personality" that resonated and endured precisely because it could house such contradictory notions of the self.

Like Murray, Hathaway did not at first aspire to enter the discipline of psychology. Born in 1903, Hathaway was raised on Marysville, Ohio where he exhibited a penchant for fixing things and creating gadgets—a penchant that would characterize his adult life as well. He always assumed he would be an engineer, but while at college at Ohio University, he was drawn to studying the inner workings of the mind instead. He entered a Ph.D. program in psychology in 1928 at the University of Minnesota, commenting later that part of psychology's appeal was that it was "an unknown field ... a field with room."[66] During graduate school, Hathaway was exposed to the theories of academic psychologists like Freud, but he remained unimpressed with them. "I took little interest in them," he said, "because I considered the systems to be premature ... Data for rigorous validation were not available, and one merely wasted time on them because they would not be enduring; in the meantime, they tended to distract one from more profitable studies."[67] This intellectual independence, distaste for theory, and skepticism of authority would be trademarks of Hathaway's career. After completing his doctorate in 1932, he took a faculty position at the university's new mental hospital.

From the beginning, Hathaway was a pragmatist, seeking not to find timeless insights into human nature for its own sake, but to streamline clinical practice. Many things unsettled him during his early months at the mental hospital. For one, he felt ill-equipped to contribute anything to psychiatrists at the hospital. Years later he recalled, "I still remember

one day when I was thinking this and suddenly asked myself: Suppose they did turn to me for aid in understanding the patients' psychology? What substantive information did I have that wasn't obvious of the face of the case?"[68] Armed with only with intelligence tests and crude personality tests, Hathaway felt he had little to offer. He viewed early personality tests such as Robert Woodworth's Personal Data Sheet as "deficient … in the clinical usefulness they were expected to measure."[69] This test consisted of 116 straightforward questions, such as "Does the sight of blood make you sick or dizzy?", in order to detect the vulnerability of World War I recruits to the horrors of warfare, although it also was employed after the war on civilians.[70] Not only were such tests short and one-dimensional, they were also "face-valid," meaning that the subjects could discern the intent of the questions and then formulate answers in ways that would present themselves in the best light. This was especially troubling to Hathaway, who soon realized that a central problem in psychiatry was the lack of universally accepted, objective criteria for diagnosing mental illness. In an era in which electroshock therapy and insulin coma therapy were often the only treatments for severe mental illness, precision in diagnosis was essential in order to prevent unnecessary fatalities. Hathaway decided, then, to develop a diagnostic tool that could meet this pressing clinical need.

Along with resident psychiatrist Charles McKinley, Hathaway developed a much more thorough test to establish a baseline of personality assessment. They pored through psychiatric textbooks, earlier personality tests, and case studies to develop over 1,000 first-person statements that they then narrowed to 550. These statements, which insisted upon a "True," "False," or "Cannot Say" answer, covered material ranging from "the physical condition of the individual being tested to his morale and social attitude."[71] The aim here, said McKinley, was "to condense those long psychiatric interviews, which were very expensive for the patient."[72] One of the real novelties of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory was its departure from face-validity and turn towards strict empiricism. Psychologists had crafted earlier tests by taking the "rational" approach, which presumed that particular answers to the questions were indicative of particular personality traits. For example, Robert Bernreuter in his widely used Bernreuter Personality Inventory — another straightforward inventory of questions thought to discern mental health — asked "Are you critical of others?"

The expectation was that an affirmative answer signaled psychological difficulties. Evidence soon showed, however, that "normal" people were much more likely than psychotics and neurotics to answer in the affirmative. Hathaway decided to remove the guesswork and devise a test based solely on "the facts."[73]

The central feature of the MMPI is its use of a comparative norm. Hathaway devised various test groups comprised of clear cases of mental illness, and he compared their answers to a group of "normal" people. Essentially, whatever answers a majority of mentally ill respondents and a minority of "normal" respondents gave determined which answers reflected mental health. Hathaway organized these responses into scales for various illnesses: first Hypochondriasis in 1940, then Depression, Psychasthenia, Hysteria, and so on until establishing ten basic clinical scales.[74] The test then matched a subject's responses with the mean created by the normative group to create a profile, or graph, to demonstrate the standard deviations of each person from the "normal" (two standard deviations from the mean was considered a signal of mental illness). Hathaway found most of his subjects at the University of Minnesota's mental hospital. For the normative group, called the "Minnesota Normals," Hathaway used 724 subjects made up primarily of patients' friends and families. This small sampling of individuals was hardly representative of Americans as a whole. Indeed, they were all Minnesotans who were mostly married, Protestant, and had a mean age of 35. Additionally, they were primarily rural, working-class subjects with an average educational achievement of eighth grade.[75] This unrepresentative sample, however, would form of the basis of "normality" in much of personality psychology.[76]

The MMPI's approach and method only make sense when placed within the wider context in which Hathaway operated. His focus on "objectivity" and strict empiricism was very much a product of the ethos of social science within interwar America. As disciplines professionalized, they labored to establish themselves as autonomous, objective data-producers whose authority would not be questioned and whose viability could be ensured. During the Progressive Era, social scientists collaborated closely with social and political activists in order to affect reform. But after the Progressive Era and the move away from reform generally in the 1920s, social scientists felt the need to establish

themselves as independent researchers whose work could not merely be dismissed as partisan or biased. Hathaway's insistence on objectivity therefore carried with it immense professional rewards that no doubt were central in framing his approach in the MMPI.[77]

The interest in classifying Americans and placing them on a wider social spectrum also transcended psychology and Hathaway's immediate clinical concerns. On one level, classification was a requirement in a new, highly complex, bureaucratized society. Educators, politicians, and corporate officers understood that sorting and managing people was essential to the basic functioning of increasingly large and differentiated social institutions such as schools, government, and industry. Classifying and measuring individuals could ensure their "adjustment" to the system and hence further rationalize institutions. Indeed, "adjustment" became the central justification for applied psychology's ever-expanding intervention in the public sphere. The dark side of this emphasis on adjustment, however, was its fundamental conservatism. Specifically, it placed the burden of adaptation on individuals rather than society itself, and it prioritized of the smooth functioning of institutions over the interests of individuals.[78]

The urge to determine "normality" or the "average," of course, extended beyond the practical benefits of classification. It also stemmed from the search for personal and national identity in a complex, diverse, and uncertain modern society. Gaining a snapshot of the "average" American in terms of attitudes, beliefs, sexuality seemed to provide solid footing in a changing society. This helps explain Americans' obsession with Gallup Polls, the Middletown studies by Robert and Helen Lynd, the Kinsey Reports, and other social scientific surveys.[79] Tied to this was the prestige that social scientists enjoyed as purveyors of social "facts" and statistical "truths." That Americans could put stock in anthropological studies like Middletown or personality inventories such as the MMPI, which established normative groups based upon one town in Indiana or one hospital in Minnesota, only makes sense in this context.[80] Indeed, Americans in the first half of the twentieth century longed for the security of commonality in a rapidly changing society.

At the same time that Americans desired a shared sense of national identity, they also wanted to ensure that they "fit in" with the wider society. Modern concerns only heightened and redirected this impulse.

With the growing displacement of town by city, identities rooted in rural life became threatened. Furthermore, with the increasing connectedness of the nation as a whole through infrastructure improvements and mass culture, Americans looked to root their identities in relation to the entire country.[81] As people's identities became unsettled, they sought vigorously to solidify that identity in national terms. Much like the social scientific surveys that Sarah Igo tracks, including the aforementioned Middletown studies, Gallup Polling, and the Kinsey Reports, normative personality tests such as Hathaway's were popular precisely for their ability to help secure that identity. They allowed Americans to see statistically, and thus "authoritatively," whether they matched the comparative norm. To test totally outside the norm might suggest incompatibility with the larger society or a personal deficiency. As the eminent behaviorist John Watson would preach, there was freedom in conformity.[82]

In addition to these broader cultural concerns, the more immediate political and social context of the 1930s helps explain the nature and timing of Hathaway's work. If in a general sense intellectual life in the 1920s was characterized physically and cultural by an escape from rural, provincial America, intellectuals in the 1930s re-imagined the nation and its ordinary inhabitants. In the 1920s, for instance, the Lost Generation writers fled from the conservatism of a country that appeared anti-urban, anti-secular, anti-immigrant, and anti-black, to a more cosmopolitan and secular Western Europe.[83] By the early 1930s, however, many of these figures returned to the United States amid the Great Depression, discovering within "the people" heroic virtues. Now the average rural farmer seemed to embody an impressive resolve and simplicity as opposed to the corruption and greed accompanying industrial capitalism. One of the cultural phenomena of the 1930s was thus what William Stott refers to as the "documentary impulse" to catalogue and convey the experiences of ordinary Americans all across the country.[84] Journalists, filmmakers, novelists, communists, sociologists, and anthropologists all ventured out to document the nation's people at an unprecedented scale. For example, John Steinbeck in *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) documented the plight of farmers during the Dust Bowl, while anthropologists Allison Davis and Burleigh Gardner in *Deep South* (1941) highlighted race and class inequality in Mississippi. The economic calamity of the Great Depression thus provided an

immediate and pressing need to document the American populace and assess the nation's ability to persevere in a transitory world. Some looked forward to change while others feared it, but all desired to better understand American life.

Early reception of Hathaway's test, however, was cool. Prominent personality psychologist Gordon Allport criticized its "galloping empiricism" and protested that it "has no rational objective, uses no rational method other than mathematical; reaches no rational conclusion. It lets discordant data sing for themselves."[85] Yet very quickly psychologists found the practical utility of the test in establishing a diagnostic baseline for mental health. What is more, psychology as a discipline gained new prominence during and after World War II. With the acceleration of the postwar consumer economy, psychology emerged as "a fully-fledged service profession," and applied psychology's role increasingly rivaled that of academic psychology.[86] Additionally, clinical psychologists such as Hathaway had remained subservient to psychiatrists in the interwar period,[87]but in the postwar period psychologists positioned themselves as experts of the problems of everyday experience in order to differentiate themselves from psychiatry.[88] The MMPI, accordingly, transformed itself from a simple diagnostic gauge of psychiatric disease to "a measure of *psychological* character types."[89] And, to be sure, Hathaway had from the beginning claimed that the test was easily "adapted to useful classification and understanding of 'normal' persons."[90] Others soon formulated scores of new scales that were tied to more general personality traits such as masculinity/femininity and introversion/extroversion.[91] A test intended mainly to be an initial attempt at diagnosing mental illness and streamlining clinical practice emerged as "the most widely used inventory of personality and psychopathology" with an estimated "10,000 articles, chapters, and books related to this instrument" being published.[92]

Although Hathaway devised the MMPI with more humble, clinical aims, he quickly justified the broader application of the test in the postwar environment. Indeed, he likened the use of the MMPI in education, government, and industry to preventive health measures, arguing:

The basic justification is the same. We hope to identify potential mental breakdown or delinquency in the school child before he must be dragged

before us by desperate parents or by other authority. We hope to hire police, who are given great power over us, with assurance that those we put on the rolls should have good personal qualities for the job. This is not merely to protect us, this also is preventive mental health, since modern job stability can trap unwary workers into placements that leave them increasingly unhappy and otherwise maladjusted.[93]

Here, Hathaway insisted that the MMPI was useful in gauging an individual's fitness for a school or job, and that the proper alignment between ability and occupation benefitted both the individual and the wider society. For these reasons, administration of the test extended to ever-larger sectors of society. Corporations began using the test to screen potential employees; high schools began administering the test on schools applicants; and the government utilized the MMPI in high-stress jobs in police departments and the Peace Corps. In this way, despite its dubious origins, the MMPI quickly became administered widely across society.

This widespread use of the test, however, would come under heavy criticism in the 1950s and 1960s. As the test extended to more affluent subjects and moved away from previously targeted marginalized groups such as mental patients, the test became controversial.[94] Educated, middle-class subjects had intellectual and social resources that mental patients did not, and they tended to interpret the MMPI items in face-valid ways. The ensuing controversy exposed the chasm between expert and lay knowledge regarding the nature of the test. Subjects found the MMPI's personal, probing questions, which included queries relating to religion, health, and sexual orientation, as deeply troubling. Such items seemed blatantly discriminatory, and many subjects who sought merely to secure a job or admission to a high school perceived them as irrelevant or unethical. Consequently, unlike IQ tests and other aptitude tests, criticism of the MMPI centered on issues of privacy and consent. These issues would come to a head in a 1964 Congressional hearing that, according to Roderick Buchanan, essentially put the MMPI on trial.[95] Several personality psychologists defended the legitimacy and utility of the MMPI and other tests against a flurry of criticism by congressman, journalists, and media commentators. This public criticism, however, eventually compelled psychologists to revise the MMPI and eliminate some of the most controversial items, culminating in the currently-used

MMPI-2. Ironically, however, the end result was to strengthen psychologists' control over tests, as "social questions were reformulated as technical problems."[96]

Hathaway and Murray took different approaches to mapping the self, but both were products of the same modern conditions. While the context of mass society pushed some, including Murray, to work to restore the self as whole and complex, others, such as Hathaway and Watson, responded to modernity very differently. For Murray, behaviorism represented all that was wrong with modern science. By reducing human beings to little more than physiological (patterned) responses to external stimuli, behaviorism, according to Murray, ignored the most important and unique part of human beings—their consciousness. He believed that by doing so, behaviorists and psychometricians were contributing to the sense of fracture, dislocation, and anomie already crippling modern men and women. Hathaway, on the other hand, shared central behaviorist assumptions in formulating the MMPI. He opposed theoretical systematization, and he believed that mental illness expressed itself in behavioral symptoms that were apparent to patients as well as doctors.[97] What Murray and some scholars have missed, however, is how Watson and Hathaway reacted to these same modern woes, but in a novel way: by adapting individuals to malleable environments, and offering community through conformity. As Steven Smith argues, "the irony of behaviorism was that it was also a philosophy of empowerment."[98] Behaviorists such as Watson stressed the empowerment derived from mastering social and personal realms. This was the heroic "personality" who could embody the masterful self that Warren Susman described and the contemporary, Dale Carnegie, preached.[99] In this way, behaviorists responded to the same anxieties over the fate of the individual in a mass society, only they stressed the freedom in conformity rather than individuality. As scientists in charge of mapping personality, these two men helped imbue this modern concept of the self with contradictory meanings, but it was precisely the elasticity of "personality" in this regard that allowed it to resolve the paradoxical anxieties over the fate of the individual in modern life.

This article has traced how two prominent personality psychologists responded very differently to the same cultural context of modernity. Murray addressed the sense of alienation and fracture of the modern self

by attempting to capture his/her complexity, richness, and individuality. This propelled Murray to draw from projective tests in order to recover the singularly creative and deep aspects of the human personality. Hathaway responded, if not as explicitly or consciously, to the longing for order and "normality" within a rapidly changing society that uprooted personal and national identity. This prompted him to devise an empirical test that could conceptualize the basic structure of the human personality and divide it into clear categories. Both men were embedded in an interwar political and social scientific context that informed their research efforts, and both men also represented competing anxieties over the fate of the individual in mass society.

Nonetheless, Murray and Hathaway were also more than mere reflections of larger social and cultural anxieties. These were prominent psychologists who published powerfully influential tests that shaped the very meaning of the concept they sought to map—"personality." This is true even though their tests would take on new forms in the postwar era. Murray helped imbue the concept with a complexity and mystery that was unique to each person, while Hathaway helped to invest in "personality" something that could be grasped in terms of normality and the average. Rather than undermining the tenability of this concept in terms of understanding the modern self, these contradictory ideas actually functioned together to make the concept appealing. Because of its elasticity, "personality" could be simultaneously unique and normal, distinct and average. This flexibility allowed for the resolution of both anxieties over the fate of the individual in modern life. Indeed, it is fitting that just as "modernity" itself is characterized by ambiguity and a plurality in meaning, so too would "personality," the concept representing the self in that modern world.

[1] Murray quoted in Annie Murphy Paul, *The Cult of Personality: How Personality Tests are Leading Us to Miseducate Our Children, Mismanage Our Companies, and Misunderstand Ourselves* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 84.

[2] Hathaway quoted in Ibid., 53.

[3] The term "mass society" is one that sociologists and social philosophers at the turn-of-the-twentieth century, such as Ferdinand Tonnies, Auguste Comte, and Emile Durkheim, invented to "denote the

transition from local communities to a national one, and not usually for the better." See Sarah Igo, *The Averaged American: Surveys, Citizens, and the Making of a Mass Public* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007*)*, 10.

[4] See Ian A.M. Nicholson, *Inventing Personality: Gordon Allport and the Science of Selfhood* (Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2003), 7.

[5] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 232.

[6] Andrew R Heinze, "*Schizophrenia Americana*: Aliens, Alienists, and the 'Personality Shift' of Twentieth-Century Culture," *American Quarterly 55* (June 2003): 227.

[7] Warren I. Susman, "'Personality' and the Making of Twentieth Century Culture," in *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century*(New York: Pantheon Books, 1973), 277.

[8] See Joan Shelley Rubin, *The Making of Middlebrow Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992). Rubin demonstrates how Victorian "genteel" values persisted well into the twentieth century, and the two sets of values continued to compete with one another; See also Heinze, "*Schizophrenia America*," who argues that the shift in values stemmed not from changes in the economic structure, but from dislocating social changes in terms of mass immigration and ethnic diversity.

[9] Joel Pfister and Nancy Schnog, eds., *Inventing the Psychological: Toward a Cultural History of Emotional Life in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 3; See also Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 128-135. Williams was one of the first in historicizing the psychological and exploring how and why psychology became such a central social discourse. He argues that the meaning of the term "psychological" narrowed in the twentieth century to refer to the personal, unconscious realm of the self, which then made the dichotomy between the individual and society seem convincing.

[10] Indeed, American psychologists remained disproportionate borrowers of European ideas and methods from 1870 to 1940, much as they did in the realm social politics. See, for instance, Daniel T. Rodgers, "An Age of Social Politics," in *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* edited by Thomas Bender (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 250-273.

[11] Joel Dinerstein, "Modernism" in *A Companion to American Cultural History*, edited by Karen Halttunen (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 201.

[12] Ibid., 202. See also: Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918*(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983); David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer, and Benjamin* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986); and John F. Kasson, "Dances of the Machine in Early Twentieth-Century America," in *A Modern Mosaic: Art and Modernism in the United States*, edited by Townsend Ludington (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 153-74.

[13] See James N. Butcher, ed., *Oxford Handbook of Personality Assessment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 8.

[14] Paul, *Cult of Personality*, 24.

[15] John Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1978), 96.

[16] Steven Smith, "Personalities in the Crowd: The Idea of the 'Masses' in American Popular Culture," *Prospects* 19 (1994): 226. See also, Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[17] Eugene E. Leach, "Mastering the Crowd: Collective Behavior and Mass Society in American Social Thought, 1917-1939," *American Studies* 27 (Spring 1986): 100.

[18] These fears would continue through the 1950s and beyond, evident in publications like David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd: A Study in the Changing American Character*(New Haven, 1950); William Hollingsworth Whyte's *The Organization Man* (New York, 1956); and Daniel Bell's *The*

End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties (1960; Cambridge, MA: 1988).

[19] Igo, *Averaged American*, 7-17.

[20] Henry Murray quoted in Salvatore R. Maddi and Paul T. Costa, *Humanism in Personology: Allport, Maslow, and Murray* (Chicago: Aldine Atherton, Inc., 1972), 38.

[21] See, for example: James William Anderson, "The Life of Henry A. Murray: 1893-1988" in *Studying Persons and Lives*, edited by A. I. Rabin, et al (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 1990), 304-334; Also, Lon Gieser and Morris Stein, eds, *Evocative Images: The Thematic Apperception Test and the Art of Projection* (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 1999).

[22] For a discussion of "internalist" versus "externalist" scholarship, see Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 9.

[23] Murray quoted in Anderson, "The Life of Henry A. Murray," 311.

[24] Ibid., 305.

[25] Ibid., 315.

[26] For a full account of this relationship and its professional and personal implications, see: Forrest Robinson, *Love's Story Told: A Life of Henry A. Murray* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

[27] Paul, *Cult of Personality*, 76-78. Murray was very much an outsider in this department, and many faculty members resented his presence there, especially after learning of his formal training in biochemistry and not psychology. He was almost let go a number of times, and he did not earn tenure for another two decades.

[28] T.J. Jackson Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930" in *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American Essays, 1880-1980*, edited by Richard Wrightman Fox and T.J. Jackson Lears (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), xiii.

[29] As a formative example of this literature, see: Fox and Lears, *The Culture of Consumption*.

[30] Murray quoted in Paul, *Cult of Personality,* 78.

[31] Murray quoted in Anderson, "Life of Henry A. Murray," 319.

[32] Peter Gay, "Sigmund Freud: A Brief Life," in *Civilization and Its Discontents* by Sigmund Freud (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1989), xii.

[33] Ibid., xii-xxi.

[34] H. Godwin Baynes, "Translator's Preface," in *Psychological Types or the Psychology of Individuation* by Carl Jung (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938), iii.

[35] Ibid., v.

[36] Ibid., iv.

[37] Murray quoted in Paul, *Cult of Personality*, 80.

[38] Murray quoted in Anderson, "Life of Henry A. Murray," 320.

[39] Henry Murray quoted in Maddi and Costa, *Humanism in Personology*, 38.

[40] Henry A. Murray, *Explorations in Personality: A Clinical and Experimental Study of Fifty Men of College Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), 9.

[41] Ibid., vii-viii.

[42] Ibid., xi.

[43] Paul, *Cult of Personality*, 86.

[44] Murray, Henry A. "Techniques for a Systematic Investigation of Fantasy," *Journal of Psychology* 3 (1937): 125-26.

[45] Ibid., 127.

[46] Ibid., 129.

[47] Lawrence K. Frank, "Projective Methods for the Study of Personality," *Journal of Psychology* 8 (1939): 389-413.

[48] Ibid., 85.

[49] Murray, "Techniques for a Systematic Investigation of Fantasy," 130-31.

[50] Ibid., 134.

[51] Henry A. Murray. "In Nomine Diaboli," *The New England Quarterly* 24 (December 1951): 438.

[52] Murray, *Explorations in Personality*, 38-39. See Kurt Goldstein, *The Organism: A Holistic Approach to Biology Derived from Pathological Data in Man* (1939); and Abraham Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (1954). Maslow became most famous in articulate this idea of people as self-actualizing beings who can achieve self-actualization only after other more basic needs are met in his hierarchy of needs.

[53] For more on neo-Freudianism, see William C. Manson, "Abram Kardiner and the Neo-Freudian Alternative in Culture and Personality" in *Malinowski, Rivers, Benedict and Others: Essays on Culture and Personality*, vol. 4 of *History of Anthropology*, ed. George W. Stocking, Jr. (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 72-94.

[54] Maddi and Costa, *Humanism in Personology*, 25-26.

[55] On the Scottsboro Boys, see James Goodman, *Stories of Scottsboro* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994). On the Popular Front, see Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 1997).

[56] For the classic study of this migration, see H. Stuart Hughes, *The Sea Change: The Migration of Social Thought, 1930-1965* (1975).

[57] Joanne Meyerowitz, "'How Common Culture Shapes the Separate Lives': Sexuality, Race, and Mid-Twentieth-Century Social Thought," *Journal of American History* 96 (March 2010): 1061-1071.

[58] See Nathan G. Hale, Jr., *The Rise and Crisis of Psychoanalysis in the United States: Freud and the Americans, 1917-1985* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), esp. Ch. 8.

[59] Ibid., 140, 143.

[60] Gieser and Stein, "An Overview of the Thematic Apperception Test" in *Evocative Images*, 6.

[61] For an expanded discussion of this, see: Paul, *Cult of Personality,* 90-103.

[62] Robert C. Fuller, *Americans and the Unconscious* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 199-200.

[63] Starke Hathaway quoted in *Basic Readings on the MMPI in Psychology and Medicine*, edited by George Schlager Welsh and W. Grant Dahlstrom (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), 374.

[64] Indeed, he once said, "It is obvious that we provide a physician, a bartender, an employer, and a spouse with different views of ourselves. One cannot say which is the *real* person." See Starke Hathaway, "Foreward" in *An MMPI Handbook: A Guide to Use in Clinical Practice and Research* by W. Grant Dahlstrom and George Schlager Welsh (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1960), ix.

[65] The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory. "Minnesota" because that it where it was created, "Multiphasic" because it measured several different dimensions, and "Personality Inventory" because it aimed to catalogue all relevant aspects of personality. The name was an awkward mouthful, so the acronym "MMPI" was almost immediately used.

[66] Hathaway quoted in Paul, *Cult of Personality,* 45.

[67] Ibid., 46.

[68] Ibid., 47.

[69] Hathaway, *An MMPI Handbook*, vii.

[70] Paul, *Cult of Personality*, 48.

[71] Starke R. Hathaway and Elio D. Monachesi, eds., *Analyzing and Predicting Juvenile Delinquency with the MMPI* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1953), 13; Clinical psychologists increasingly guard against the publication of items on the test, seeing

such publication as detrimental to the basis of the test. Nevertheless, a few examples will demonstrate the often bewildering range of the items: "Evil spirits possess me at times," "I have never had any black, tarry-looking bowel movement," and "Everything is turning out like the prophets of the Bible said it would."

[72] Hathaway quoted in Roderick D. Buchanan, "The Development of the Minnesota Multiphasic Inventory," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 30 (April 1994): 150.

[73] Paul, *Cult of Personality*, 48-50.

[74] Buchanan, "Development," 153.

[75] Paul, *Cult of Personality*, 51.

[76] To be fair to Hathaway, he did not initially conceive of his test as becoming as popular as it did. He sought mainly to develop a practical instrument that could assist in and serve as a tentative baseline for psychiatric diagnosis. The wide-scale adoption of this test in the postwar period transcended its humble aims, and in the process the fraught origins of the test were often overlooked until controversy erupted in the 1960s. For concise summaries of the MMPI and its basic features, see Jerry S. Wiggins, *Paradigms of Personality Assessment* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2003), 164-192; and Butcher, *Oxford Handbook of Personality Assessment*, 250-251.

[77] For a good overview of interwar social science and objectivity, see Mark C. Smith,*Social Science in the Crucible: The American Debate Over Objectivity and Purpose, 1918-1941* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994).

[78] See Donald S. Napoli, *Architects of Adjustment: The History of the Psychological Profession in the United States* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1981), 30-41.

[79] See Igo, *Averaged American*.

[80] Indeed, "representativeness" became a major claim of social scientists in this era. Social anthropologists, for instance, variously claimed Muncie, Indiana; Natchez, Mississippi; Newburyport, Massachusetts; and others communities as representing entire regions or

even the nation as a whole. See Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1929); Allison Davis, Burleigh Gardner, and Mary Gardner (*Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941); W. Lloyd Warner, *The Social Life of a Modern Community* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941).

[81] Dinerstein, "Modernism," 201.

[82] Smith, "Personalities in the Crowd," 269.

[83] See Malcolm Cowley, *Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s* (1934; repr., New York: Penguin Books, 1951).

[84] See William Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

[85] Gordon Allport quoted in Paul, *Cult of Personality*, 52.

[86] Buchanan, "Development," 156.

[87] Indeed, Hathaway depended on McKinley much more than McKinley did on him. Hathaway needed McKinley in order to gain access to the mental hospital and its patients. Furthermore, McKinley's disproportionate power in the relationship was reflected in the test content of the MMPI itself. Many more purely medical, symptomatic items appeared on the test as a result of McKinley's influence. Hathaway later recalled this, saying, "McKinley was not wholly an advantage to me at that time … Most of those items I would have kept out if I could have." See Paul, *Cult of Personality*, 50.

[88] To be sure, both psychology and psychiatry had been positioning themselves as relevant to increasingly larger sections of society throughout the twentieth century. Indeed, both claimed expertise over the realm of everyday experience. See, for instance, Elizabeth Lunbeck, *The Psychiatric Persuasion: Knowledge, Gender, and Power in Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); and Cohen, S. "The Mental Hygiene Movement, the Development of Personality and the School: The Medicalization of American Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 23 (1983): 123-149. Nevertheless, the postwar period marked a crucial shift in this

disciplinary struggle for authority, with psychology emerging as the dominant discipline in the realm of the everyday.

[89]Buchanan, "Development," 157.

[90] Hathaway, *Analyzing and Predicting Juvenile Delinquency*, 13.

[91] See *Basic Readings on the MMPI.*

[92] Wiggins, *Paradigms of Personality Assessment*, 175.

[93] Starke Hathaway, "MMPI: Professional Use by Professional People," *American Psychologist* 19 (March 1964): 207.

[94] See, for instance: William White, *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1956); Martin L. Gross, *The Brain Watchers* (New York: Random House, 1962); Banesh Hoffman, *The Tyranny of Testing* (The Cromwell-Collier Publishing Co., 1962).

[95] Roderick Buchanan, "On Not 'Giving Psychology Away': The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory and Public Controversy Over Testing in the 1960s," *History of Psychology* 5 (August 2002): 292.

[96] Ibid., 284.

[97] Buchanan, "Development," 151.

[98] Smith, "Personalities in the Crowd," 272.

[99] See Susman, *Culture as History*; and Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936).

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